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# Recollections

ELLEN McGOWAN BIDDLE

WILLIAM B. CAIRNS COLLECTION  
OF  
AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS

1650-1920



WILLIAM B. CAIRNS  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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To my Niece  
Lina Barbara Brown  
who spent many happy  
hours with the Ad. Home  
as a very little child.  
Ellen M. Green Biddle







## **“RECOLLECTIONS”**



# “RECOLLECTIONS”

BY  
**ELLEN McGOWAN BIDDLE**

**Author of “Reminiscences of a Soldier’s Wife”**



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*To my granddaughter*

**ELLEN BIDDLE**

*A sunbeam that never casts a shadow*



## **“RECOLLECTIONS”**





# “RECOLLECTIONS”

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## CHAPTER I.

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THE earliest recollection of my life is of being held fast in my nurse's arms, looking at my Father killing a snake, under the grapevine arbour. There was never anything in my mind that I recall about the nurse except the black face being close to mine, and that I perfectly remember. The next thing I remember in my infancy is of being carried on the back of a sailor from a small boat, through water to the shore. In telling this to my Mother many years after, she said no doubt she had taken me with her when she went aboard the ship on which my Father was then stationed to spend the afternoon, and on returning the tide must have been too low to allow the boat to come close to the shore. She also said I could not have been over two-and-a-half years of

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age. I have always thought the killing of the snake caused an unpleasant shock, while being carried on the sailor's back through the water (which all children love) must have given me a thrill of joy, and therefore, both events were impressed on my brain.

I also remember at that same time an old bedridden black woman, to whom my Mother sent food by the nurse, who took me always with her. I am sure had I been older I should have declared her a witch. I have never forgotten her great piercing black eyes.

My Father at that time was a First Lieutenant on the “*Wolcott*,” U. S. R. Marine, Captain Hunter Commanding, and stationed on the Delaware River, where he found a fine old-fashioned house with a large garden at Port Penn, which he rented for the summer months.

My Mother was always a lover of flowers, plants and shrubs, and of working among them, and here she must have had her heart's desire.

I have no other recollection until about six or seven years of age, for we lived in a city and bricks and mortar do not convey to a child's mind what flowers, trees, grass and birds do. When I was seven we moved from Philadelphia, where my Father had been stationed, to Elizabethtown, New Jersey, where my parents had purchased a home. Some one asked my Father, about this time, why he was settling at

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Elizabethtown; he replied that he had so many tow-boats (eight children) he thought best to put the ship (meaning of course my Mother) at anchor. Elizabethtown had been suggested to my Father as a place of residence by Commodore James Palmer, United States Navy, who was at that time known as “The Chesterfield of the Navy,” (the mantle afterwards fell on the shoulders of Admiral Rodgers, whom I remember years later as a very elegant gentleman). Admiral Palmer thought Elizabethtown the most desirable suburban place of residence in the country, especially near New York, where my Father had to be, the society being, as he said, aristocratic. The schools fine, and well-known Divines were in the pulpits.

Admiral Palmer had told my Father much about the society, as Father had young lady daughters, and of the schools because of the young ones still to be educated. And they found many delightful families living there, among them General Scott, U. S. A., General Clark on General Scott's Staff, the Mayos, Kings, Edgars, Keans, Chetwoods, Daytons, Gracies, Fishers, and many other old New Jersey families.

Dr. Nicholas Murray, D.D. (grandfather of Nicholas Murray Butler, D.D., President of Columbia College of New York) was pastor of the

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First Presbyterian Church, built before the Revolution.

Dr. Murray was considered a very clever writer; he had a controversy on the subject of Catholicism which was said to be most interesting; he wrote under the nom de plume of “Kirwin,” but to my recollection the Archbishop got the better of the controversy. The Doctor was an ardent Sectarian, and in fact in those days all the denominations were Sectarian. If you asked Mrs. Smith if she knew Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Smith, being a Presbyterian, would quickly reply, “No, Mrs. Jones is an Episcopalian,” and the same with all the different creeds. The visiting was confined almost entirely to the churches one attended.

A rather good story was told on Dr. Murray, when I was about sixteen years of age, that amused every one of all denominations. One evening at service, the Doctor was exhorting his congregation to more zealous work for their church, and said, “We have a firebrand on our right,” (meaning the Methodist Church), “and an iceberg on our left,” (meaning Saint John’s Episcopal Church). Miss Sally Dayton, a clever unmarried lady, an Episcopalian of about eighty years of age, on hearing of the remark, wrote a note to the Reverend Doctor, calling his attention to Revelations III, verses 15 and 16:

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“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot; I would thou wert cold or hot, So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

Years later Mr. Willie Fisher went with my brother-in-law, Capt. Harmony, U. S. Navy, on a cruise to the Mediterranean. He was very anxious to know something of the life aboard a “Man-of-War,” and so went as Captain’s Clerk. He afterwards wrote an interesting article about the experience.

It would indeed have been difficult to find another town where so distinguished a gathering of men could be found. It was not a business centre, there were a few shops, two or three medical men, including Dr. Crane (James S. Green, M.D. a most eminent surgeon came later). Also several lawyers well known in the courts of the different States. General Robert Anderson, U. S. Army, was another resident, who had added laurels to his name in Mexico when very young, and greater laurels in the Civil War. He was married in Elizabeth, I think at the home of Major William Chetwood. Captain Bomford, another Army officer of distinction and son-in-law of General Clark, was also there.

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## CHAPTER II.

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SAMUEL CLARK, D.D., was Rector of Saint John's Episcopal Church, which was also a much-beloved historic church. I well remember the painting over the chancel, — it had a light grey background with a Dove descending holding an Olive Branch in its mouth. It was considered very beautiful. The pews were large and square and with high backs. In the days when ladies wore hoops it was often difficult to enter the pews gracefully. I always sat on one of the smaller seats, and could see the ladies whom I loved to watch come in. Mrs. Chancellor Williamson and Mrs. Archibald Gracie were two of the most distinguished-looking ladies I have ever seen. I remember so well the pleasure I had in seeing them. Mrs. Williamson seemed to glide, her whole presence was full of grace and charm. Mrs. Gracie was the same type of woman — tall, slender, and every movement the personification of grace. The type has disappeared — what with Woman's Suffrage and the tango little feminine grace is left.

Mrs. John Kean was another graceful woman, and

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surrounded with her ever-growing family she was easily mistaken for one of her daughters.

Mrs. John O. Stearns was the beauty of the congregation in those days, and she, too, as well as the others, was always accompanied by a lovely group of children.

In looking back on this picture, I realize the great change time has made in the mode of life. In those days Life, in its entirety, meant love, home, husband and children. To-day with many — happily not the majority — it means rushing about the streets crying votes for women and desecrating the tomb of Washington. One can but ask, “Are these the women to be entrusted with the affairs of State, and if so, where will it lead?”

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## CHAPTER III.

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BUT I have gone ahead of the long pilgrimage we took to reach the dear place to be our home. Although the road has been changed many times since then, there are still points of interest remaining which recall to me that wonderful journey. There were of us, my Father and Mother, eight children, — Esther, Georgia, Virginia, Kate, John, William, Matilda, a very young infant, and myself, — besides two colored servants, "Aunt Minny," who lived with my Mother twenty years, and Mary Perry, the nurse, who was with us for over thirteen years, until I was quite a big girl, when she went back to Baltimore to be married, and it was a genuine grief to my brothers and myself, and no doubt to my Mother also.

But now we are all designated, we will return to the car. I sat upon my Father's knee most of the time and listened as he pointed out the places of interest to my older sisters, and talked of the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Even to this day I look out as we pass Rutgers College remembering the first

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time I heard the word and saw it; so it was with all the places mentioned.

It was not only the town or the building he called our attention to that gave interest, but the fact, that he, my Father, was with us, telling these things to us; and so it was all through his life, and as I grew older I realized his wonderful charm and magnetism, also his gift in making you see the picture his mind drew for you. We were all never happier than when listening to him talk on any subject.

I have travelled much since that pleasant unforgettable day,— by rail, by ambulance and mules, and by horseback over desert and mountain trails,— but the picture of that first ride in those far-off days stands out as fresh in my mind as when we all journeyed together.

On arriving at Elizabethtown we went to the old hotel known as “Shepherds,” opposite the Court House, and the old Presbyterian Church, and grave yard, which my brother Jack and I explored before bedtime. We must have nearly filled the house, but fortunately we were there but a few days when the home was ready for us. And here I feel I must linger a moment and try to say what that home was to me through so many years of my life. Long after my girlhood and marriage I was always greeted with the warmest welcome, no matter how many children

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I returned with, and they were made to feel it was their home, the same as I had felt before leaving with the soldier I married.

I do not forget the first time I saw it, as I was always an intense and, I expect, an emotional child. It seemed very wonderful to me, and I felt the beauty of the place. It was an old Colonial house built early in 1700, set rather high on a terrace with great elms in front, which I learned to love; the large pillars and the wide stoop greatly impressed me. The hall was about twelve feet wide with an unusually beautiful staircase, which later I also loved. The two great square parlors (to please my sisters) had been thrown into one large drawing-room, with arch and fluted columns in the center where the mahogany doors had been. In the front of the room was an exquisite old white marble mantelpiece, on which stood rare old Chinese vases, and small bronze pieces. My Mother's Father, William Caldwell, having been a sailor man and merchant, trading in his own ship "*The Lovely Matilda*," between England, China and Philadelphia, had brought to his home many rare and beautiful things.

There was usually a bright fire of anthracite coal burning in the grate, while a large open fireplace for wood was in the back of the room, back of the pillars where my dear Mother always sat of an evening, with

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her lacework or embroidery, while my sisters entertained their guests in the front of the room. The carpet was of dark red velvet and the furniture was of old mahogany, including four high back Sheraton chairs, which my great-grandfather bought at the sale of General Washington's furniture held in Philadelphia when the Capitol was removed to Washington.

There were over three acres of ground around the house, all kinds of fruit, grapes and berries; the large English gooseberry was my delight, never having seen them before. There was a large barn with horse and “Carry All,” a fine cow and chickens, and Mother used to call every one of us to help drive in the little chickens if she saw a cloud in the sky. She was a novice in the country as well as her children.

The wing was on the left side of the house as it faced the street and stood back about thirty feet; the dining-room was here; it had three large windows and door opening on the front garden, the beds of which were outlined with old box. The chief piece of furniture to my mind was a mahogany table that had belonged to my grandparents, my Father's Mother and Father,—three could sit at each end, four on each side. Then there was a side table the same size as the ends of the big one, which could be placed or added when necessary.

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The kitchen was a large square room, and the great big oven was there, which was always a sort of mystery or hiding-place to me. The parrot's cage always hung there. We had her for over thirty years, but I think she was young when Father brought her to us from Aspinwall in 1849. A bunch of bananas always hung near her cage, — Father brought them, also oranges and pineapples, when in season, by the barrel. Also all kinds of West India preserves, guava jellies, pomegranates, and all kinds of fruits and rare plants. Outside the kitchen was the laundry, and then the woodhouse, where the tools were kept, and where we loved to play on a wet day when we could not be out.

It did not take long for my parents to become known in all classes in the town; Mother always, until the day of her death, supplied the hospital and the neighboring poor from her garden, and in the winter soups and bread were made and regularly supplied. My Father was always ready to talk with the workingmen when they would stop on seeing him in the garden, and give advice when asked for. We had no Bolsheviks at that time, and although we had many tramps after the Civil War they were not vicious and ready to tear down the Government.

I was particularly proud of my Father when the fireman's parade took place, which was generally in

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the springtime; the house would be decorated with flags and Father in his uniform would stand out on the stoop and salute them as they passed. Young as I was, it always thrilled me when they dipped the colours, and in my childish ignorance I at first thought it for my father and felt very proud. Generally there was a big pink lustre bowl of punch in the hall for the chief and any other invited guests, while Richard and a fireman carried pails of lemonade for each man to have a refreshing drink, the boys (my brothers Jack and Will) helping or thinking they were.

I also remember with delight the little brass cannon Father captured in the Mexican War; the salute fired from it on July 4th when my Father was home is among my earliest recollections; later my two brothers used to be the powder-monkeys, and still later, my own two sons were very proud to act in the same capacity. Lieutenant Derby, U. S. Army, who was visiting us one Declaration Day, made a caricature of my Father and two brothers discharging the cannon; it was most amusing and excellent, indeed perfect, as all Lieutenant Derby's drawings were. My son still has the picture.

At the time we went to Elizabethtown my Father was in command of one of the Pacific and Atlantic Mail Steam Ships, built to carry passengers, gold

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and freight of all kinds to and from Aspinwall, where the passengers left the ships going to California, to cross the Isthmus of Panama on mules to the Pacific Ocean, where they again took a steamer to California. It was a hard and dangerous journey in those days. The class of men generally, especially in the steerage, were of the worst class, going out to the gold diggings, so that men of nerve, force, and capable of discipline were necessary to command these ships.

Captain David D. Porter, U. S. N., afterwards promoted to Admiral for his distinguished services during the Civil War; Captain Herndon, U. S. N., who years after went down with his ship "*The Central America*," in a terrible storm; Captain Carlisle Patterson, U. S. N., and a most delightful gentleman; and Captain John McGowan, my Father, were the first officers detailed by the Government to command these ships. I may say here that my Father found the duty so much more lucrative, he resigned from the service and remained with the Steamship Company, until the breaking out of the war with the States.

The voyages were not always pleasant and always filled with anxiety, though they carried many delightful first-cabin passengers. I remember my Father telling of a voyage from New York to Aspin-

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wall with twelve hundred passengers aboard “*The Empire City*.” When the cholera broke out he said men died from sheer fright; they would come on deck saying “Captain, I have the cholera.” The surgeon would examine the case and find nothing but nervous fright, but many of them gave up to fear and died.

One special case always interested me, and I vividly remember it. A bride and groom were going to California from Philadelphia to start life. The bride was petite with black hair and eyes, good complexion, and pleasing mouth. She had made herself agreeable and pleasant to many of the passengers. Her husband was phlegmatic and rather quiet. One morning during the epidemic he went on deck, found the doctor and told him he knew he had cholera. The doctor tried in vain to dissuade him, but the man simply laid down on the deck and died. As many as fifty were buried at sea in twenty-four hours. It was soon found the poor little bride had no money, only their tickets through and little else. The passengers and officers of the ship made up a purse to send her back to her home, but she begged to be sent on to California where she felt sure she could earn her living. So arrangements were made, and she went on in the care of other passengers.

A good many years afterwards my Father was in San Francisco on some duty, when a lady approached

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him on Montgomery Street, saying, “Oh, Captain, I am so happy to see you.” Father was a little perplexed at first, accustomed as he was to seeing so many different faces on shipboard it was hard to remember. But something about her awoke a memory, and he recalled the little bride so tragically widowed. She begged he would come to see her; she had much to tell him. Later, finding he had time, he went to the address she had given him. He found a large building with names of different well-known people on the house, but did not recognize hers. However, he went in, knocking at the number given, and was ushered into an office dimly lighted, where several people sat.

All seemed greatly preoccupied and worried. All the time Father was wondering what could be her business, but he had not long to wait. Soon the last patient had gone and she came in, turned up the light and began, at his request, to tell her story.

After she arrived in San Francisco she tried without success to find employment, such as she was capable of doing, but without avail. When in desperate straits she remembered she could tell fortunes with cards, and reading the palm of the hand with her friends at home. So she hired a room and met with instant success, so great that she hired a woman

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she knew, whose business it was to go every day and find out all she could about everybody in the city.

They kept a book and the history of everyone noted in any way was put down. The “Fortune Telling” became the talk of the place, and she had made a small fortune for herself and companion.

I have often wondered if the later clairvoyants followed the same practice; I have never been to one, and often thought this little story told by my Father, when I was a young girl, had no doubt prejudiced me.

I have digressed longer than I intended, and must return to the recollections of my home and my childhood that was so happy.

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## CHAPTER IV.

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INDEED, I imagine few children were happier or freer from care than I. I had all kinds of pets, our parents allowed us to have what we wanted, but there was one rule never broken. We had to feed and care for them ourselves. As soon as one was neglected it was taken from us.

We had dogs, rabbits, a parrot that could both sing and talk, and entertained the people that passed on Sunday afternoons. She could sing "The Gloria Patria," songs from "La Fille du Regiment," and innumerable others. Then we had Jocko, the monkey, and mocking birds. I raised six one spring, and they knew me so well that when I would go in the room where they were, they opened their little bills and cried for food. The mother had died when they were a few days old; not one of the little ones died.

The parrot Polly, of course, we taught. My sisters would put her cage on the piano and sing to her, and she could imitate each one of us.

I think I must tell of a visit to Easton my sister Kate, brother Jack and the monkey, Jocko, were

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invited to make one summer. Mother fastened Jocko in a basket with a cover, and the children had food and water for him. We saw them off at the station and all seemed well. In about an hour's time, while Jack and Kate were deeply interested looking at the country and other scenes which they were passing, they heard a frightful shriek. On jumping up, as everyone else did, Jack found Jocko had got out of the basket and had perched himself on a woman's shoulder, much to her fright and disgust. He was soon coaxed down with sweets and allowed to stay out of the basket, and afforded amusement for many of the passengers, as he was very friendly. My great regret was that I had not seen him make the jump. He had a real sense of humour, and I know he enjoyed the woman's consternation.

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## CHAPTER V.

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ON looking far back into my childhood, memory recalls two beautiful weddings that left a deep impression upon me. They were the first church weddings that I had ever seen. The first one was that of Miss Josephine Mayo, whose father was originally from Virginia, but their home at the time of her wedding was in Elizabethtown. She was also a niece of General Scott, U. S. A. The wedding was in the New Christ Church, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Eugene Augustus Hoffman, who was then the Rector.

Miss Mayo was a tall, beautiful brunette; the officer she married, Lieutenant Archibald Gracie, was also very tall, and held himself as only a young officer from West Point can. Young as I was, the whole ceremony thrilled me.

Many years after, when the war between the States occurred, Lieutenant Gracie went South. His father was a cotton broker of New Orleans, and the family living there during the winter sympathized with the

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South. Lieutenant Gracie became a Colonel and distinguished himself in the Southern Army.

The other wedding I so often have thought of was that of Miss Fanny Clark, daughter of General Clark, who also lived in Elizabethtown. General Clark had won high honours in Mexico, distinguishing himself greatly, and was at the time I write of on the staff of General Scott. This wedding also took place in Christ Church by the same Rector, but Miss Clark was a rarely beautiful blonde, tall and slender. Her husband, Captain Edson, U. S. A., was also an army officer of fine presence, but I feel sure the wonderful beauty and grace of his bride took all the attention from him. The beautiful picture has remained ever in my mind.

My eldest sister was married to Mr. Charles H. Caldwell when I was quite young, but I well remember the man coming to lay the white canvas on the floor and to put up the brackets for the wax candles. The bride I remember as very pretty, and the music and flowers and the general gaiety of the scene was very exciting.

My eldest sister was married when I was quite young, but I well remember the man coming to lay the white canvas on the floor and to put up the brackets for the wax candles. The bride I remember

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as very pretty, and the music and flowers and the general gaiety of the scene was very exciting.

Later, when I was much older, Georgia was married to Lieutenant Harmony, U. S. N., and again the canvas was laid and the flowers, music, officers in uniform. The dim lights of the wax candles, the ceremony, and my beautiful sister as a bride made a lovely picture. I enjoyed it all greatly, and lost my heart to several of the dashing young ushers and guests. Both of these weddings were considered very brilliant, but neither of them impressed me with the feeling that the earlier church weddings did.

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## CHAPTER VI.

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WHEN I was fourteen years of age my Father gave me a pretty bay mare. No one ever was so happy as I. "Lady Lightfoot," I called her, and many were the delightful rides we had together. I had no fear, and really did not know what it meant until many years after. I soon learned to be a good horse-woman, having a natural seat in the saddle, and through the teaching of an English coachman who drove our neighbor's horses. Before I was sixteen I had tried all the "new" horses that came to the town, before many of the girls would ride them.

The first real sorrow I had in my life was when my brother Jack (John McGowan) went to sea before the mast. He had graduated at Mr. Young's Prep School when fourteen years of age. He was an unusually clever boy, especially in higher mathematics, and I have heard my Father say he (Jack) could navigate a ship when he was ten years old. Of course my Father had taught him.

His going away was a terrible grief to me. We had always been the closest possible companions.

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There was no tree on the place that I did not with him go to the top, looking for bird's nests, and day after day I would climb to the top of our great barn by the clapboards, to look in the pigeon houses to count the eggs, or to be the first to see the young squabs or birds in their nests, no matter where the nests were builded. We had a great swing in the barn, and one of the rules was the upper barn door was not to be opened when we swung, but I often digressed, and though at that time I did not know Campbell's lovely verse:

“I remember, I remember, where I was used to swing  
And thought the air must rush as fresh to swallows on  
the wing.”

I too used to feel like a bird with the air rushing over me. One September day I was swinging, swinging high out in the air — the upper barn doors wide open — my Father came home earlier than usual and saw me; with a wildly beating heart he rushed to me, fearing I would be mangled before he could get to me. The swing came down that night, and another safer one was put by the apple tree.

When my Father was at home he loved to have his friends about him and the house was always gay. After dinner he would take my Mother's hand (she always sat next to him and one of the older girls

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poured the coffee) and we would go in the parlour. One of my sisters would play the piano and we would dance the old-fashioned quadrille. Then there would be singing.

My eldest sister, Esther, sang like a nightingale. Many masters and gentlemen begged my Mother to let her study for Grand Opera, but Mother would not give her consent, and so this great talent was wasted. She married early, when scarcely eighteen. Her life was a disappointment; she should have given her wonderful voice, so full of sympathy, strength, and charm to the world. She sang for a few years in the Epiphany Church, Philadelphia, and Mr. Pierce Butler, a distant relative of my Mother, told her he went to the church often and stood with bowed head while he listened to her.

My sister Kate also had a beautiful voice, but not comparable to Esther's. It was contralto and fine. She and I sang in the choir of old Saint John's Church. When I was only a girl, scarcely sixteen, my voice was clear soprano, but only suited for ballads. I sang day and night, whenever awake, and for many years it seemed “the lark sang for me.”

My Mother was a fine housekeeper, notwithstanding she spent so much time in her garden — everything went on smoothly. We had regularly but

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two maids, and a coloured man, Richard, who was ubiquitous ; he lived with us many years. When my brother-in-law, Captain Harmony, was at home, he and my father would tell the funniest jokes to try and catch a smile on Richard's face ; sometimes they would see his back fairly shaking, and father would quickly say, “Richard,” and as quickly he would turn and come, but no change in the countenance could be seen.

The dinners at home were noted ; my Mother had learned the art of cooking, her mincemeat made in November covered with good brandy to keep it, and her English plum puddings made from an old family recipe were famous ; the puddings were distributed far and near at Yule-tide. Mother told me the bitterest tears of her early married life were shed because she knew nothing about cooking. She had been brought up by her grandmother, who had good English servants. Mother married very young, went away from home, and had often to depend on an ignorant Irish girl ; father would bring his friends in to dinner or luncheon, and often the food was not properly cooked, — so she made up her mind she would learn, and did so to perfection, so as each daughter became engaged to be married she had her taught cooking before the wedding.

One day, when about sixteen years of age, Mother

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told me I was to come to the dinner that evening, she was giving, in place of an elder sister, who was not well. You can imagine my excitement the rest of the day, but about seven-thirty I appeared in the parlour dressed in a white embroidered India mull gown with small ruffles on the skirt, — which our friend, Mrs. Brewer, who had known me all my life, had sent me from Havana, and Mother had put a bertha of soft Mechlin lace and some blue rubbons on it.

I knew most of the guests, but a Mr. Charlick, who was one of the owners of the Steam Ship Line of which my Father was a member, asked Mother if he might take me out to dinner. He was not a young man, and he and his wife had traveled extensively for those days, and had just returned from a visit to Italy. He was so interesting and I so interested in the many things he told me of Rome that I quite forgot I had been a little scared when I first found myself by my Father's side meeting his friends whom I had never seen. Mr. Charlick I never saw again, but he and the white India mull gown have always been associated with my first dinner-party, that I so much enjoyed. The mull gown I wore a few months later to my sister Georgia's wedding, and even after I was married I wore it frequently, for my husband loved it.

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## CHAPTER VII.

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ON looking back, I think I must have been a terror to my sisters at home. I had the very bad habit of being a good mimic, often a most dangerous pastime. And although I was not allowed in the parlour after our dance in the evening, having my lessons to get and bed at nine o'clock, yet often I would slip in to say a last good night to my Mother, who, as I have said, sat by the square mahogany table (I now have) and embroidered or made lace work. Of course I lingered a moment, and then would be called on to mimic some former guest or tell a dialect story. Trouble always followed for me next morning, and it was easily seen why I was sent away to school before I was sixteen years of age.

It was really a grief to me to leave home, and all my pets, my neighbours and friends. Every man who drove a cart in town I knew, and they would let me hitch my sled to their waggons when snow was on the ground, when they were not so kind to my brothers. We had a neighbour who owned large oyster-beds off Staten Island, and the great Perch-

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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erous horses and big trucks coming home every evening interested me greatly. I had known these kindly people since I was a very little child, and they were always glad to show me the great stables or a new horse, and they were sorry, among other neighbouring friends not in fashionable life to say good-bye to me.

After I had been at school about six months, they got my address from Mother and sent me a large keg of most beautiful, as well as delicious, oysters. I have never had a more genuine compliment, and have never forgotten it. Emerson says, “there is always compensation,” and surely it came to me.

It was, as I have said, a great grief to me to leave my home and go away to school, but the compensation came, in having the good fortune to be sent to Mr. William Gilder (then at Flushing, Long Island, and father of Richard Watson Gilder). Mr. Gilder had the gift of imparting knowledge and making the classes pleasant places. We had algebra, English literature and rhetoric with him. He read well and understandingly, and was most particular with our enunciation.

I had had good training in French history and English literature at home. When no guests were there the conversation at luncheon and dinner was either on literature or history. A subject was always

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given the day before. We also had words, their derivation and meaning. This training was through the suggestion and influence of an aunt, Mrs. Frances Lyons, a widow, and my Father's eldest sister, who spent six months of the year with us. She was, without exception, the cleverest woman I have ever met throughout my long life, an incessant reader and like my Father blessed with a phenomenal memory. She and my Father were taught by their father who was a graduate of the College of Dublin.

When my Father went to sea before the mast at fourteen years of age (as his own son did later) his father gave him two books, one the Bible, the other Shakespeare, and told him to study both, which no doubt improved an already fine memory. There was no passage or verse in either book that he could not instantly give you from a quotation. In looking back, I often think the most of my real education was gotten in that delightful way in that dear, dear home. What precious memories cling around you!

In time I became fond of the school. Watson Gilder and I were great friends, although he was a year younger. He was a very serious boy, and I, a gay girl full of spirit; he wrote charming verses even at that time. Mrs. Gilder, his mother, was a beautiful woman with great repose of manner. In after years when I knew Miss Sarah Randolph (one

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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of the great educators of her day, who educated my own daughter Ellen) I saw why Mrs. Gilder, though not a teacher, had had the same influence upon the girls in her charge.

We had at school what we were pleased to call, our Intellectual Society. Each member had to contribute during the month to the evening's entertainment on Fridays, when there was no study hour. There was music, both singing and playing, dancing, charades, etc. I wrote and delivered humourous lectures with all the gravity I could gather. The roars of laughter from time to time were so great from our salon, that every one in the school, great and small, soon wanted to join our Society, and we were able to give a really good performance at the close of the year.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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MUCH as I liked school and was willing and indeed anxious to return, my father thought me looking frail and thin, and decided best for me to spend the winter following in the South. My sister Kate, next older sister to me, was to go also. She was really a Saint Katherine, never caring for society, but always doing good, visiting the poor and sick, never thinking of self but of what she could do for others. She had a beautiful contralto voice and sang in St. John's Church. Many years after she married with bright prospects one of the Chetwood family, but when reverses came, she was never heard to lament or regret the loss of her wealth or what she had been unable to continue doing. She was blessed with three fine children.

We started on our delightful vacation late in November. My sister Esther coming from Philadelphia to see us off. Georgia and her husband, Lieutenant Harmony, were in Europe, he stationed in the Mediterranean. A number of the boys and girls went to see us off as it was then quite a novelty

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for girls to be going on a sea trip. We sailed on “The Empire City” to New Orleans. I enjoyed every moment as I was not sea sick. After landing we went to the Saint Charles Hotel, where we stopped over night and the next day took the steam boat “General Quitman” to Plaquemine, Iberville, Parish, Louisiana, to visit a schoolmate, Tennessee Robertson, of whom we had become very fond at school, and she had visited us the previous summer. It is quite safe to say no two girls ever had a more delightful visit any where. Everything was thought out and arranged for our pleasure and enjoyment.

Mrs. Robertson was a widow, with two daughters, one, Mrs. Pope, married and living at Baton Rouge, where we visited them later. Mrs. Robertson had a fine sugar plantation back of the River, and it was a great sight to see them make sugar and see the little darkies grow fat, eating sugar cane all day, and which I also did; it was delicious.

Mrs. Robertson’s brothers, Mr. Gervais Schlater, and Dr. Romaine Schlater, lived in fine colonial houses on the river, where the boats stopped and where Mrs. Robertson’s whole family met us with a hearty welcome on our arrival on the “*General Quitman*.” The trip up the river had been most exciting and entirely new to us. There were boats of all sizes and kinds, passenger and freights, crafts of every

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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description, some racing. The river was very high so it was impossible to make landings at many of the plantations. There were very pleasant passengers, a band of music and dancing, and as my sister and I were in the captain's charge we lacked no attention. Years after when I went up the river in the same boat with my husband, after the war, we were at first not so kindly received, but before we left the boat the Yankee Captain and his young wife were wished “God speed” as we went ashore at Natchez.

Returning to our friends at Plaquemine, Dr. Schlater was a tall distinguished looking man with a beautiful young wife, and lovely baby boy of just one year. Mr. Gervais Schlater had three little girls, but he was a widower.

We spent our time when not in the saddle, between the three houses. Our chief occupation and my delight was riding, and I had never seen such horses, sure footed, well gaited and perfectly safe. I often rode with a young man named Edward Desobiy, son of a French gentleman near, who had a large plantation. Mr. Desobiy was killed in the war between the States. My favourite ride was along the levee on the river, and I would jump my horse across the

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\* Their grandfather, a French gentleman, had owned an immense estate in Louisiana.

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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opening for the horses and carts to go to and from the boats.

We spent several weeks with these charming highly cultivated people. Most of their summers were spent travelling in Europe. It was an education to be with them, and we regretted having to leave, but we were in high spirits, for Tennessee and her uncles, and beautiful Mrs. Schlater were all to come to us in the spring time, before going to Newport with their New York friends, the Metcalfs.

And so we parted; alas, we never saw them again. Years after, when the war was over and my husband stationed at Natchez, Mississippi, for the Reconstruction and where we made so many dear friends, I wrote several letters to Plaquemine to the different ones I had so dearly loved, hoping to hear something of them. We learned the Dr. and family had gone immediately after the war to Europe. Mr. Gervais Schlater and his beautiful little daughters had moved to the North. Mrs. Robertson had died and we could hear nothing of Tennie or Tennessee, except that she had married and gone from Plaquemine. All this my husband learned from a gentleman on one of the Mississippi boats. During the four years we lived in Mississippi we never gave up trying to find them, but they were lost to us forever.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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ON leaving Plaquemine we went to New Orleans for a visit, where my Father met us and we stopped at the Saint Louis Hotel in the French quarter of the town, where I found the old houses and gardens very interesting. My Father had many friends in the city who were most kind to us, showing us all the points of interest in the city; the French Market with its wealth of flowers and the old Cemetery interested me greatly. We also went to the French Opera, but it did not thrill me as it had done six months before when Mr. Gervais Schlater had taken my sister and myself to hear Patti and Brignoli in "Il Trovatore." It was the first time I had ever been in a large theatre, and the beautiful opera house, the wonderful voices, the acting, the brilliancy of the whole scene thrilled me as I have rarely been thrilled since, and although so many years have passed and I have heard many, many operas since, I sometimes close my eyes and try to live over the delightful emotions I felt then. My Father being called away by

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duty, left us with some old and dear friends of his, and my Mother.

Our stay in New Orleans was very gay, but I missed the life in the open, the dear people we had left and the wonderful horses. We had dances galore, and a little human vanity prompts me to tell of a flattering little episode. We had been at a dance at the house of my Father's friend, where we remained over night. In the morning the maid who packed our bags forgot one of my satin slippers and later in the day it was returned in a box tied with ribbons, and the slipper filled with exquisite flowers, and a note from Mr. Chapman, saying among other pretty things, “he had no idea such a little thing was meant for use, but only for ornament.”

On leaving New Orleans we went to Havana, on the ship “*Crescent City*,” Captain Griffin, commanding. I was always a good sailor, so enjoyed the few days immensely, but our disappointment was great to find my Father was not there to meet us. However we were taken to a hotel kept by an American lady from the South, an old friend of my Mother who was expecting us. I will say right here we became great friends, she always, during her life, remained fond of me and sent me many pretty gowns, before I was married because I had always had to wear the gowns fixed over for me that had been my sisters.

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When I left home in November I was not supposed to be a young lady, but the months spent in the South, being thrown entirely with older people and meeting both men and women who did not treat me as a child, I naturally had developed into a young woman. In Havana I was quite a “young lady,” went to a ball at the Tacon Theatre, and was a great belle owing to my golden hair, which until that time had been called a “carrot mop” by my brothers.

Our stay in Havana was most exciting for me. We rode every afternoon in a Volante where the driver sat well forward on his horse which was harnessed well away from the Volante. I always sat on the little seat in front called “nina bonita,” while the chaperone and my sister sat in the back. After a drive through the Parks we would go to the Plaza where the Royal Band Played; would stop and have ice cream and other dainties brought to us, and the gentlemen would come and talk to us. We went through the Moro Castle, stopped in the Whispering Gallery and chatted with the officers. Mr. Ramon Williams, my Father’s friend, had something new and delightful for us each day and evening.

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## CHAPTER X.

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THE delay in my Father's coming was caused by an accident to his ship. So on his arrival he transferred passengers, specie and freight to another steamer and was about to put my sister and myself under Captain Griffin's charge to New York when I rebelled. I would not go. I felt if it was safe enough for my Father (after a few repairs) it was safe enough for Kate and me, and finally he yielded to me. So we bade adieu to our many friends and picturesque Havana with many regrets.

On the ship there were only the officers and crew aboard, and it was thrilling to have the decks to ourselves. I am sure I walked miles with the different officers. The days were full of sunshine and the nights were beautiful. The world seemed so peaceful and our ship behaved beautifully until we were nearing Cape Hatteras. We ran into a tremendous storm and the wheel that had been repaired stopped. We tossed and plunged and things looked very serious for us all, but I had no fear and sat in the cabin talking with Dr. Otis. I begged to be allowed

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to go on deck ; I wanted so much to see the men at work with the great hawsers which they would put round the wheel with greatest difficulty, trying to get it started by pulling with every man's full force, they worked all night. Toward morning the storm broke and we were safe but we steamed very slowly on. My dear Father's anxiety must have been very great ; aside from the responsibility of his ship and lives of those who belonged there, his two young daughters were in the cabin of the ship awaiting the outcome. The rest of the voyage was calm. We steamed quietly into dock early in the morning.

It was only a short time before this, possibly a year, when my Father was coming along on the same ship with hundreds of passengers, when a little south of Cape Hatteras a storm struck them, the fury of which my Father who had been at sea all his life, had never seen. The old ship tossed and was thrown about and buffeted by the sea, so that human aid was almost hopeless, but the sailors worked like heroes ; some with boiling water running over their feet (which were later amputated) while they stood by their engines. And so the ship was finally got to Norfolk, Virginia, battered and broken.

My Father was transferring passengers, specie, etc., when a telegram from New York told him to go out in search of the “*Central America*,” which had

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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not been heard from. After getting fresh sailors, and sending the poor fellows, who were broken down, to the hospital, he set out to look for the other ship. After searching hours in the direction they had encountered the gale, they were rewarded and began picking up people from the ill fated steamer “*Central America*,” Captain Herndon, U. S. N., commanding. She had foundered in the same gale the “*Empire City*” had encountered and all had gone down.

My Father picked up over one hundred passengers, among them being D. O. Mills, Esq., of San Francisco, and his daughter, Mrs. Easton, who had a canary bird in her bosom. The poor little thing had died, but Mrs. Easton’s wonderful humanity is shown that in her own great danger she had thought to save the life of the bird. Mr. Mills’ devotion to my Father lasted throughout his life time, and was inherited by my brother, but Mr. Mills told him, it was because he was his Father’s son, which of course, I loved.

A very strange and interesting thing occurred at home at the time of this wreck. My mother at breakfast told us she had had a very vivid dream, the night before, of my Father’s ship being in a terrible storm, and while she did not see the ship go down she saw people in the sea in great distress.

All day she was depressed and would not listen to our reasonings. Next morning she tried to get my

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sisters to promise they would not go to a large party at Chancellor Williamson's. They but laughed at the idea of giving up the party on account of her dream, but Mother felt so badly she told them if they would give it up, and nothing came of the dream, she would give them a large party the following week. All agreed.

That evening about five o'clock a telegram came from Norfolk telling the story of my father going out again to look for the ship. After the storm, the Steam Ship Company were so well pleased with the way my Father had brought in his ship and passengers to safety that Mr. Moses Taylor said he would build him a fine new ship, which he did and it was called the "*Moses Taylor*."

The silver trophies presented to my Father by a few gentlemen representing all of the passengers were very handsome. They also brought a large sum of money for him but my father would not receive it and also declined everything but the gentlemen insisted upon leaving the silver with my Mother.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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ON our arrival in New York the first thing we heard were rumors of war, and owing to the great excitement all over the country for several years, I never returned to school. We were brought into the war immediately. I remember it was the spring time of 1861 when our great elms in front of the house were in bud, and the bluebirds and robins were busily building their nests in the old big apple trees close to the house in my Mother's garden, where I had a favorite seat and took my book as early and as late as the season permitted. The birds were never afraid of me, but would keep on with their work or sing sometimes as though their throats would burst. But the morning I write of, they were greatly excited, for my brother Will and I were digging worms, preparatory to a day of fishing on the morrow, and the saucy robins would come as close as they dared and Will would throw them occasional worms to see them fight over them. While we were as jubilant as the birds, Kate appeared, looking very serious, and told us father was going away in a few

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hours. We were naturally sorry to hear it, for it ended our fishing trip. So gathering up the tin can and leaving the worms for the birds we went into the great big old kitchen that we both loved. It had the old-time brick oven where twenty loaves of bread or twenty pies could be baked at one baking, besides “Polly,” our beloved parrot, always hung there, and a bunch of bananas ripening. Going on we found our Mother and Father in the dining room; my dear father had gone away so many times in my life, I thought nothing of it. The joy of his return far outweighed the sorrow of the parting. So I remember being at a loss to know why my Mother and sisters were so serious. None of us were told where he was going, but evidently Mother knew it was some secret expedition for the government. My father sailed the next day on “The Star of the West,” with sealed orders (as is now known), which were not to be opened until he had passed Sandy Hook, and the pilot left the ship. There was a company of artillery commanded by First Lieutenant Charles R. Woods, Ninth U. S. Infantry, and two Lieutenants besides a surgeon. Their mission was to reinforce General Robert Anderson at Fort Sumpter with food and ammunition. In the first place the ship drew too much water to enter the harbour and besides Fort Moultrie turned their guns upon the

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ship and as the ship had no large guns aboard, they were obliged to pull out and return. Thus, my Father had the first shot fired upon him in the Civil War. My daughter has the Old Flag, with the holes in it. It has been sacredly kept these many years, and last year as her daughter was marrying a soldier they were married in the pergola which had been beautifully decorated with hydrangeas and hemlock boughs and the old flag was most artistically draped over the bower where they stood.

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## CHAPTER XII.

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It would be difficult for any one to realize the change the war made in our home life. Lieutenant Harmony, U. S. N., who had married my lovely sister, Georgia, eighteen months before, came home from the Mediterranean where he had been stationed, bringing my sister home, and left hastily for Washington. He was later in all the battles under Admiral Farragut, on the Mississippi River, the taking of Forts Jackson and Phillips being one of the great feats of the war. John, my brother, had returned from a cruise to China, had passed his examinations as Acting Master in the Navy, and had a small Flotilla on the Potomac. My father was also in command on the Potomac. My brother William had run away and enlisted for the second time, being determined to fight for the Union. We were *desolate*, Father, brothers, and brother-in-law, all in active service, yet with all the anxiety she must have felt I never saw my Mother cast down, always hopeful, always cheerful and her faith in God's mercy something wonderful. It was before the days of mental

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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science being practised but she would not let one of us express a doubt or possibility of one of our loved ones not returning; it increases one's faith to know they all, including my husband (later) came back to her unharmed. She had placed them in the care of Almighty God, and her faith and prayers kept them safe. I have elsewhere said it would be difficult to imagine the change in our life. When my father was at home in the old days, he loved to have his friends about him and rarely dined without friends with him. Life was simpler in those days and yet I have seen seven different kinds of wine served at a dinner party, but I never saw any intoxication.

At the time I write of there were no trains running from New York to Philadelphia or Washington, on Sundays, so often officers, friends of my Father or brother, arriving in New York late Saturday, would take a train out to Elizabeth and spend Sunday with us and take an early train Monday to their destination. I remember Admiral David D. Porter, when I was a very small child. My Father wanted me to dance the Sailor's Hornpipe and Highland Fling, then in vogue for children's dances. I remember his hearty laugh and his showing me how to hold my hands to hitch up my (supposed) breeches. I saw the Admiral many times later in my life after he had so greatly distinguished himself in the Civil War,

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and received the highest honours. Admiral Porter and Admiral Farragut were brought up together like brothers. When Commodore Porter, N. S. N. (the Admiral's father), was a young man he was stationed somewhere in the extreme South (if memory serves me right), he was taken extremely ill, desperately so, and Admiral Farragut's father and mother took the young officer to their home and tenderly nursed him to recovery. The Lieutenant never forgot them or their kindness and continually wrote asking if there was not something he could do for them. One day, years later, he got a letter telling him they would like to have their young son go into the Navy. Lieutenant Porter sent for the lad, who was not twelve years old; he took him to his home, got him a commission and he grew to manhood with the Captain's own sons in the Navy. His first ship was the "*Essex*." In the old days lads went to sea first for two or three years and on returning from the cruise went to the Naval Academy.

I also remember General Hancock, who was a guest at our home about 1858-59. And there was a warm friendship that existed through life between Captain Hunter and General Hardie's families and our own, my sister Georgia being named for Mrs. Hardie's mother. I also remember General Totten of the Engineers, U. S. A., and Mr. Centre of New York.

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These men were the engineers of the Panama Railroad and my Father had great respect for their opinions and intellect. I have still some etchings of Panama done at that time by Fessenden N. Otis, who was surgeon aboard my Father's ship and quite a distinguished artist.

Among the lesser lights who came to see my sisters and myself were Commander Edmund Potter, U. S. N., who afterward made a good war record; Dr. Dan Conrad, U. S. N., a delightful gentleman, who went South when the war broke out; his family was from Virginia. Then there was Lieutenant Edward McRae, who sang tenor delightfully and could not resist making love to every pretty girl he met. He afterwards married a widow, in Paris, whom he had not met since being a midshipman. He caused a great deal of amusement among the officers who had known him well, when they would hear him (before the marriage) swearing his devotion and fidelity for so many years, when most of them knew he had been intercepted running away from a New York hotel with a beautiful girl. Ned was always charming and an ardent lover while it lasted.

There were many others coming and going. There were Colonel and Mrs. Bledsoe from Mississippi came for a week-end and Dr. Tenison and his brother were also with us. The Colonel had married a young, beau-

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tiful girl, school friend of my sister. He was much in love and thought only of marriage. While walking in the garden with the two young guests, the Colonel asked, “Which one of the young ladies are you thinking of marrying?” The Doctor was amused as he had no thought of marrying any one, so he said, “Well, Colonel, which one would you advise me to ask?” “Oh, either, the Colonel replied, “after seeing the mother you would be perfectly safe.”

I once said and still think it true, our house and home was gay because most of us had a keen sense of humour and one of us had wit real wit. I had neither a brilliant mind nor wit, but my dear Mother used to say I was the sunshine of the house, and years after when I married and left home Mother closed the house and went to Baltimore for the winter. She said she felt as though there had been a death in the family.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

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GENERAL SHERMAN and my Father were friends for many years. I think they met first in San Francisco in 1849, and afterwards in New Orleans, where, if memory serves me right, the General was a Professor in a College. He frequently stopped as guest at my Father's house, coming sometimes for the week-end with my Father, and sometimes with Lieutenant Harmony. He was always full of anecdote and humour. As a child I was fond of him, never dreaming he would one day be my guest in the most distant corner of the continent. On this visit to Fort Whipple, Arizona, which was one of inspection, the General was making of the Army, with all of his staff, the details of which I have elsewhere given, my husband spoke to him about an appointment to the Naval Academy for one of our sons, and his (Colonel's) desire for "leave" to go East and attend to it. The General said "he would be glad to do all he could as soon as the lad was old enough, but he could not promise the leave." Several months later, perhaps a year, I went East with my two youngest chil-

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dren, to visit my parents, after an absence of nearly six years. The following winter I went with my sister, Mrs. Harmony, to a tea in New York, given by Mrs. Ricketts Lawrence. On the way we stopped at Madame Hartley's, where I bought a much needed bonnet. In those days there was a distinction between a bonnet and a hat—the former was considered necessary for dress occasions; a hat was worn only in the morning except by very young girls. Well, my bonnet was charming. It was of red velvet shirred closely. The sole ornament was a flat jabot of white lace with a gold enamel buckle on the top. It was indeed a pretty thing!

On arriving at Mrs. Lawrence's house I found to my surprise and delight that General Sherman was a guest. We had much to talk about and one subject was of the appointment for my son. Again, he expressed his willingness to help me. Later in the winter I wrote asking him to tell me the first steps to take toward asking for the appointment. He wrote in answer fully telling me what to do, winding up his letter by saying: “Put on your little red bonnet and come down with your application, and you'll get what you want.” Of course, I carried out my instructions to the letter, being careful to put on “the little red bonnet,” being both much amused and delighted that the grim old soldier had noticed it.

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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The General met me at the station, and took me to Mrs. Baird's, the wife of General Absolum Baird, U. S. A., with whom I was to stay. (And I must add that I had a most delightful visit with that accomplished, charming lady.) The next day at three P. M. the General called for me in an old-fashioned Barouche. He sat beside me, but his body turned round almost to face me, and so we drove down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Butler house, where the President, Chester Arthur, was staying. He had not yet taken possession of the White House. Naturally, on entering the drawing room, I felt the greatest timidity; I had been but a short time from Arizona, where I had been many years, and also at other places on the desert, entirely out of all social functions. The General seeing me a little nervous, laughed at me, gave me a seat in the corner of a sofa, placed a chair near for the President and then said, “Here comes the President; don't be scared, look at him and tell him what you want.” By that time the President had approached. The General presented me with the nicest introduction, telling he had brought me to ask my favour, because he could not give my husband “leave” to come East to look after the matter himself. I looked at the President, and saw not only a very handsome man but one of the kindest faces I had ever looked into. He was so gracious I

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forgot myself completely in asking the favour. He said he had not had time to look into the matter, but if he found he had two appointments to give, I should have one for my son. The other was promised to a New York lad. Of course I rose,\* when he said, “Oh, don’t go, won’t you talk to me a little while?” I was more than pleased and in answer to his many questions I was able to tell him much he wanted to know about conditions then in Arizona, moving some Indians from their reservations, etc. In a short while I again rose and after a few words I left with the General, entirely forgetting what I had called for, only carrying away with me the remembrance of a gracious, charming gentleman, and one I was proud to think was the President of the United States. No citizen, however humble, could fear to approach him; his simplicity put one at ease immediately, yet all the time you felt his ability. I always felt doubly indebted to the dear General for giving me that red letter day.

~A chapter of events occurred in my life late in 1864. My brother Jack, Acting Master U. S. Navy (who in after years became an Admiral) was aboard a ship, whose name I cannot now recall, lying in the Hampton Roads, sent for me to come spend a few

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\* Knowing his time was valuable, having been told he was going to Atlanta that evening.

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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days with him at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, which I gladly did. Everything was so new to me, for I had never been in an Artillery Garrison and the old Fortress, the oldest in our country, was full of interest. There was the moat and parapet with great guns (for that time) standing in very warlike manner, and the old oak trees and Colonial or Georgian houses were pictures not to be forgotten, and the Guard Mounts, Parade and Drills, aside from the people I met, formed an ever living picture in my mind. Among them were Generals Flagler and Getty, two of our most distinguished Generals, and I sat beside them at dinner twice. General Upton was there for a day, enroute for the front. Colonel Ramsey, a delightful young officer, also sat at our table; his brother Alan had been killed shortly before. All was excitement. We stopped at the old “Hygia,” which every one who has ever been there carried away delightful memories. It was before the days of the grand “Chamberlin.” After an unusual week my brother took me to Washington to meet my Father, who was to be there a few days, and again I met men who were making history of our Country. It was indeed a wonderful experience for me. The city seemed filled with officers in uniform and soldiers with grave faces were hurrying with despatches from different departments; all seemed excitement, yet

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there were dinners and dances every evening. I saw the different public buildings from the outside only, which interested me.

My Father had not time to take me inside any of them but the Treasury Department, where I was presented to the Secretary, Mr. Salmon P. Chase, at whose house I had the pleasure of dining informally, and met a most beautiful woman, a Mrs. Niell, from Columbus, Ohio.

I also had the honour of meeting Mr. Edwin Stanton, the great Secretary for War; but what gave the halo to the short visit was, that my hand was held a moment by that great man, President Lincoln. We were going into the Capitol when my Father said, “Here comes the President.” He seemed to be entirely alone; my Father, knowing him, turned to pay his respects, and presented me as his daughter and the wife of my soldier, who was with Sherman’s Army. He took my hand in his and smiled at me with the most wonderful smile, looking at me with such kind, kind eyes. Very little was said, very little, if anything by me. I was too thrilled, but the picture never has faded and has always marked an epoch in my life.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

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GENERAL GRANT, or President Grant, I had the pleasure of meeting in the White House, when General Burnside and General Farnsworth took me with Miss Edes, with whom I was stopping for a few days. Although I had intense admiration for the greatest general our army had ever known, and was most happy to meet him as President, still I think seeing the White House, walking through the rooms where the greatest men of our country had been and left that undefinable atmosphere, which the great always leave, gave me more lasting pleasure than the presentation, for dozens of others were hurrying me on, so that the grasp of the hand and smile seemed pre-functory.

General Burnside and General Farnsworth were both civilian members of Congress, but at the outbreak of the war both answered the call of their country and entered the army, where they became equally distinguished as soldiers. After the war they were returned to Congress by their constituents, and served their country intelligently and patriotically,

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the rest of their lives. Men who serve their country on the battlefield, facing death, learn to realize what the love of country means and are willing to make the supreme sacrifice for it.

Admiral Farragut, United States Navy, came later in my life. I knew him after I was married when visiting my sister and brother-in-law, Captain Harmony, at the New York Navy Yard. I have already written of his charm and simplicity of manner. When Admiral Farragut went abroad, after the Civil War, to visit the foreign countries to which he had been invited, Captain Harmony was selected or detailed to command the Admiral's "Tender." Mrs. Farragut and my sister accompanied them by invitation. It was a wonderful experience for my sister. When the Admiral and wife were presented at the different courts Captain and Mrs. Harmony were also presented. I remember Georgia telling me of a delightful friendship she formed with the Queen of Greece. Georgia would go over to the palace at the invitation of the Queen to see the little Prince Constantine (now King) have his bath. My sister was a lovely woman, and had the greatest charm of any one I ever met.

But I have digressed too long again. Among the sad changes in the home was the death of Virginia. She left us very suddenly and it was a great shock to my parents, and indeed to us all, who were so

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proud of her. She had, without doubt, the best mind in the whole family and the men who came to see my father always enjoyed talking with her. Esther was also clever; indeed Senator Allison of Illinois, at the dinner table in Washington, told my sister, at whose house he was dining, that Mrs. Charles Caldwell had the most brilliant mind of any woman he had ever met. But Esther had neither the education or the real knowledge of her younger sister, Virginia. Esther was gifted in both song and conversation. Virginia was a student, but not so brilliantly endowed. Both of these sisters had great masses of copper-colored hair.

I have told that all of our men were at the “front” and the women, far and near, were working for hospitals and soldiers’ fairs, plays, and every well-known device was accomplished to raise money; not so much as we now do, for we were not so far advanced either in the science of war, surgery or camp and hospital discipline, but all gave the best that was in them. Among other things, a play was given, “London Assurance.” Montague, the favourite actor of the day, came out and coached the cast. If I remember rightly, the following men and girls took part: Miss Lizzie Halsey and Mr. Charles Suydam (whom the beautiful Miss Halsey afterwards married); Miss Lily King and Major Rufus King; Miss

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Gussie Stearns and Mr. Jimmy Toler took the leading parts. It was a great success; a special carload of people came from New York to see the play, and attend the dance afterwards, the tickets being sold at some fabulous price. Several officers had got a few days' leave and took part. I was one of the girls invited to be in the play, being a horsewoman, and full of spirit. I was most excited over it and anxious to take part, but Mother would not listen to it. She was decidedly of the old school and did not believe in ladies showing themselves in public; neither would she allow either of my two sisters, with their beautiful voices, to sing in public for charity, though she spent her own life in good works. Since then I have always believed more in environment than heredity. My Mother had been brought up and lived all her young life with a Scotch grandmother, Lady Anne Griffin, who was a strict Presbyterian. Although Mother was not a Presbyterian, her father being English, she was brought up in the Episcopal faith. Still the seeds dropped by the little old Scotch lady took ground, and were never eradicated.

We had a club called “The Lancers.” The young people not yet out in society met once a week. It was started before the war. The members were, if memory serves me right, the Misses Emily and Hetty Halsy, Lina and Harriette Mayor, Thalia and Gus-

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sie Stearns, Elizabeth and Mollie Williamson, Sally Filkins and myself. The lads or young men were Rufus King, George Bomford, Jimmy and Charlie Gracie, Jimmy Toler, Bradbury Chetwood, Will Dayton, and one or two others whose names I do not recall. These young men without exception went to the war. It was only occasionally we would see them, when they would get a few days' leave. Everyone of them married and were well known in official and social life.

Mr. Charles Suydam, who married Miss Elizabeth Halsey, became a Colonel, as did also Bradbury Chetwood, who was on the staff of General Keys, and later married his daughter, Miss Nelly. Rufus King became a Major and married Miss Maria Williamson, a daughter of the Chancellor. George Bomford was also a Major, and indeed every one of the lads belonging to the little dancing class became fine soldiers and citizens. All have passed on.

Sally Filkins was the most beautiful girl I ever saw. She was an orphan and lived with her grandmother. Her beauty, grace and fascination I have never seen equalled, and I have often heard men and women say the same thing. The poor child died of consumption (as both her parents had) when only twenty-two years of age.

In the meantime during all the excitement of fairs,

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plays and work for the Army, I met the soldier I married. He saw me first in church. His sister's pew was back of ours, and before service he asked his sister, “Who is the girl with the golden hair?” His sister was surprised and only had time to say, “Why, Nelly;” she thought he must have met me on one of his former visits. However, after service, he suggested waiting for me at the door. When I arrived they joined me, and Captain Biddle, U. S. A., was presented. We walked home together and permission was given me to dine with Mrs. Babcock (his sister) with whom he was spending a few hours, having been ordered to New York on business connected with his regiment, the 15th Infantry, then stationed or rather serving in the Army of the Potomac. Mrs. Babcock's property adjoined ours on the west, and the families were intimate.

The next time, some months later, when the Captain came, I was at the top of a large tree, where I had climbed to see if the eggs of a thrush (who had builded her nest there year after year) had hatched. I was particularly interested, for all the time she sat on her eggs her mate sang to her incessantly. I did not then know it was the habit of the male thrush, and thought she was perhaps a very fascinating female. It was this visit I was making when the soldier, looking very gay in uniform, came into the

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garden, whence he had been directed. I was indeed much chagrined, for I did not see how I was to get down. Fortunately he asked me to take a walk, and return to his sister's for dinner. While he went to the house, at my request, for the needed hat, I soon landed on terra firma.

Late the following November we were married\*—a hastened war marriage. Captain Biddle had been ordered to Indianapolis to pay the soldiers advance bounty, and found the 71st Indiana Volunteers had been hurried to the front in Kentucky to meet Kirby Smith. Captain Biddle followed and found them a mile from the town. He had just finished paying them when the pickets were fired upon. Later, after having placed the Government money in safety, he returned to the battle-ground, and offered his services to General Nelson.

The Colonel and Major of the 71st Indiana being killed, Captain Biddle was ordered to take command or to fight with the regiment and did so until the battle was over, winning a fine brevet. After the regiment was sent back to Indiana for reorganization, the men petitioned the Governor to make Captain Biddle their Colonel, and Governor Morton, the great war governor, gave the regiment to him. Thus you see he won the regiment on the field of battle.

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\*November 20th, 1862.

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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**It was afterwards known as the 6th Indiana Cavalry, and the war records tell its gallant history.**

As soon as he received his Colonelcy, the Colonel wrote my Mother as well as myself, entreating our marriage before the regiment should again go in the field. The date was set, and as the time approached he found it impossible to get leave, even for a few days. A simultaneous move was about to be made by Eastern and Western armies and no officers were allowed to leave their regiment. So again urgent letters and telegrams were received, asking Mother to bring me to Indianapolis; and like the many, many war brides since, I went with my Mother and Mr. Edward Biddle, the Colonel's father, to Indianapolis, where I was married at noon, November 20th, in the Episcopal Church by the Reverend Theodore Holcomb and Bishop Talbot of Indiana.

Convocation had just been held in the church, so there were many clergymen in the chancel. General Orlando Willcox and staff, Governor Morton and staff, Mr. Hendricks and his wife (he was afterwards Vice-President of the United States), General Henry Carrington and staff. A number of the officers and men of the new regiment, besides many other distinguished officers, were present, as well as many civilians, ladies and gentlemen, friends the Colonel had made during his short stay there. I have been

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**told by many that it was a very beautiful wedding, but I seemed in a dream and did not even hear the chimes ring out. We went immediately to Terre Haute, where the regiment was being mobilized. It was now a cavalry regiment, the 6th Indiana.**

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## CHAPTER XVI.

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EVERY day I rode out to camp; usually an officer was "detailed," as he said, to look after me. It was generally Lieutenant John Ball or Lieutenant Dick Thompson, whose mothers, living there, were more than kind. Sometimes the Adjutant, Lieutenant Brown, had the "duty." I remember some time later, an elderly gentleman on the train asked Lieutenant Brown what were the duties of an Adjutant. "Frequently looking after the Colonel's wife," replied the Adjutant. The regiment was composed of the best class of men in that section of the State; many were the sons of well-to-do farmers, and many came from the best families of Terre Haute. I soon felt I was not among strangers. They took me to their hearts and I have never forgotten the loving kindness given me by the dear people of Terre Haute, many of whom have passed on to a higher life; but while life and memory last with me I shall cherish the days I spent there as a bride.

Soon came marching orders. The Colonel had drilled his regiment from morning until night, he was

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so anxious to have them fit for the field. All were glad when orders came. I marched with the Colonel at the head of the column. He had given me for my wedding gift what he knew I would love best, a beautiful thoroughbred Kentucky horse, gray with beautiful dapples, and so gentle and intelligent. He had won several races, three-quarter mile, was splendidly gaited, and altogether was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen in horse-flesh. Every day since owning him I had gone out for a ride, and every day I loved him better.

A great disappointment met the Colonel, officers and men when they reached Indianapolis. It was found orders had been changed, and the 6th Indiana Cavalry was to remain and guard the large prisoners' camp established at the outskirts of the city. As I have said, the disappointment was great, but orders had to be obeyed, and soon the regiment got accustomed to this most trying duty. I went out two or three times a week, and always to the hospitals. The men walking round the camp were half-starved, half-clothed, wretched-looking creatures. Their suffering must have been great. Those in the hospitals made your heart ache, and it was difficult after leaving to get the picture out of mind.

I made regularly soups, nourishing calves'-foot jelly and wine jellies, and anything else I could to

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relieve this poor suffering humanity. It was a good lesson for me, for I had the same work to do on the frontier. While our soldiers were not in the desperate condition of these southern prisoners, oftentimes they were very ill. Our Government at that time never provided delicacies or special food for sick soldiers. They had medicines and surgical treatment, but the hospitals were poorly equipped in every respect, even for many years after the Civil War.

After many months of duty at this camp, the regiment was again ordered to Paris, Kentucky. Rumors came of Morgan's men invading the State, but notwithstanding the rumors I rode with the regiment to Paris, Kentucky. One of the lieutenants rode with me to the nice-looking little hotel, where I was soon made comfortable, as they were expecting me, from the Colonel's telegram.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

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I HAVE mentioned my horse having won several races in Kentucky before I owned him. Well, the day before our departure from Indianapolis, a party of officers and ladies asked me to go for a final ride. After going a short distance, we drew up at the public square, where our band was giving its last concert in the city (the Colonel was so fond of music and so anxious for the regiment to have a band he paid the salaries of the men himself for months until a sufficient band fund was raised). After listening a few moments to the music, we decided to go on, and leaning forward, I patted "Jim" on the neck, and drew my rein. The music and the gathering of the people excited the horse. He thought it was a race, and away he flew, out Meridian Street.

Captain Hutchins, of General Willcox's staff, started to come after me, but soon realized what was the matter, but everyone thought it a runaway. Windows were raised and people stopped in the streets to look, and no wonder. My hat had blown off, my hair, which was like a cloak round me when

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down, was flying in every direction, and on I went. When we had gone about a mile he quietly stopped, arched his neck and looked about. He had won his race. We came back finding great excitement, but I was unharmed and never had an easier ride. I knew as soon as he started what was the matter, and had not the least fear of an accident. I had never been thrown in my life, and I knew I was safe. My greatest want was a few hairpins.

On the march to Paris, Kentucky, I rode at the head of the column, when not taking gallops off by myself, or with an officer, who had got permission; so I knew pretty well the fine roads at that time from Covington to Lexington, where I went later.

Soon after the regiment was encamped, some of the citizens, Union men, invited the officers and ladies of the many regiments camped there, to a ball given in their honour, the first military ball given in Kentucky during the war, and the first one I had ever seen. The room was dressed with flags and stacked bayonets held wax candles, and to me it was altogether thrilling. Every officer was in uniform, the blue and the gold, and trailing swords, and clanking spurs added greatly to the scene. I was a good dancer in those days, and of course the Colonel's wife lacked no partners.

After supper, toward morning, when enjoyment

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was at its height, the long roll of the drum was heard.

Every officer dropped his partner and fled. He had to reach his command a mile distant, and the report was that “Morgan” was close upon them. Imagine the consternation of the women! Some wept, some had hysterics, and all were under great excitement. As the Colonel bade me a hurried good-bye, he said, “Take the first train you can get home, the proprietor and his wife will help you.” I went immediately to my room, packed my trunk, and after a hurried breakfast, which those good people insisted upon my taking, was driven to the station to meet the first train for Cincinnati.

While waiting for my train, a military train rushed in and out, got General Sam Sturgis, his staff and many other officers, some of whom I had known in Indiana. After hearing of the raid the previous night, and of my being sent home and was then waiting for my train, the General said, “I rank Jim Biddle, and order you to go to Lexington, Kentucky, where all the troops will be tomorrow,” and turning to an officer I had not met, he presented Colonel Keogh of General Stoneman’s staff, and said, “Colonel, will you see that Mrs. Biddle reaches the hotel in Lexington safely?” My luggage was then re-checked, and I with the officers got in the military train and were soon off for Lexington.

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That evening, I sat the General's right at dinner, and there must have been twenty other officers at our table. There were other officers and ladies at other tables in the room, but General Sturgis and staff had just arrived and was in command of the troops there. As soon as we had reached the hotel, the General had sent an orderly out to camp to tell Colonel Biddle I was at the hotel and for him to come in when he could. The Colonel's astonishment on receipt of the message can be better imagined than described.

My stay in that dear city was altogether delightful; I met many of its distinguished citizens and was taken about to see all the sights, including “Ash-ton,” the home of Henry Clay. I then and there met Colonel John Mason Brown, one of the youngest Colonels in the Civil War, and who was, after the war, when only twenty-five years of age, Governor of his State, Kentucky. General Stoneman was in command of the division then stationed there, and Mrs. Stoneman, a very handsome and attractive woman, lived at the hotel, so it was nice to be chaperoned by so charming a woman. Every afternoon we rode horseback, accompanied by several officers. Colonel Keough, the officer who had been given charge of me from Paris to Lexington, was always one of our party, Colonel John Mason Brown, Colonel Cappron and Lieutenants Brown, Ball and Thompson.

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Our favourite ride was along the cliffs of the Kentucky River. The roads were fine, none like them anywhere in the country at that time, and our cavalcade would fairly fly when we got out of town. Dear Colonel Capron used often beg me not to ride so “desperately.” He would say, “For God’s saks, Mrs. Biddle, for God’s sake,” but away we went. Life was so beautiful. I am sure God smiled upon me as he did on Great Saint Michael, when he gathered up the fragments of a sunbeam, flowers and all beautiful things to make Italy, or perhaps he made me one of his children.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

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EVERY day, as formerly, I went out to the camp; an orderly brought in my horse every morning by ten, and I would take a quiet ride out. I loved to try the Colonel's new horses, and often scared "Snyder," the stable sergeant. Colonel Biddle bought several new horses to take on the campaign, and it was natural that I should want to try them. Some of them had never had a woman on their backs before or to ride them. They were spirited but always let me mount them. I am sure horses and dogs and perhaps most animals know the people who care for them. I never had trouble with any animal I owned or cared for.

Soon the troops were all in fine condition, well drilled and ready and anxious to meet the enemy. Soon, too soon, for those of us left behind, the bugle sounded and our best beloved rode away to join General Sherman. Alas! Many of them never returned.

The evening before the troops left Colonel John Mason Brown, who had a Kentucky regiment in Col-

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Colonel Biddle's brigade, called to bid us goodbye, as he had been ordered on temporary duty to Cincinnati and would join his regiment later. When he found I was to leave in the morning he assured my husband he would look after me and put me on the train for New York, which naturally relieved my husband's mind. It was wartime, troops were being rushed in every direction; there were of course special trains for them, but there were no trains that did not have officers and soldiers aboard.

Mrs. Stoneman, Colonel Brown and I left Lexington about eleven o'clock. The troops had made an early start and were gone ere we left. On reaching Cincinnati we went to the hotel. That evening Colonel Brown took us to the opera to hear Patti and Brignoli. I cannot recall the opera; imagination was at work—all the time I was riding with the regiment or wondering where they were camped, or perhaps somewhere I could later join them, or, alas! maybe already in a fight. Besides I felt badly at parting with so many I had grown fond of. Mrs. Stoneman laughed at me and said I should be a better soldier.

Next morning Mrs. Stoneman and I did a little shopping; then about 3 P. M. we went to the station and while waiting for the train a man brought to us a lovely basket filled with chicken sandwiches, fruit

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and other delicacies, which Colonel Brown had ordered for me (Mrs. Stoneman was remaining in Cincinnati). There were no Pullmans in those days, no sleepers or diners. We got out at stations for meals. Well, he took me through the crowd and was fortunate in finding me a seat. Then the goodbyes were said, thanks, and words which convey so little of one's real feelings, and we parted. I never saw him again, but often in the years that have passed I have thought of that fine young face, where truth, honour and integrity shone. Many of his family were in the Southern Army, but he was steadfast and distinguished himself in the war, and when peace came he was made Governor of his State and served with equal distinction as a statesman.

Every one of those officers who were with us in Kentucky have passed on to a higher life. I alone of that great group am left, and await the summons.

After Colonel Brown left me and our train was speeding East I took a look at the person who was next the window in the same seat. I confess I was puzzled to know the sex to which this person belonged. It was of small stature, wore a soft G. A. R. Army hat, with gold and black cord and acorns; a Regular Army overcoat and narrow black alpaca trousers. The feet were small and in Army shoes. At first I thought it a woman, then a man; but finally

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seeing the throat decided her to be a female. I kept very quiet. The car was crowded with civilians and soldiers, men, women and children, some standing in the aisle of the car.

Night began to come on, the car was close and warm, the person began talking about the heat, spotted fever and other unpleasant subjects, to which I said all people travelling at that time had to run risks, and I thought it would be better if those who were not in the Army would defer their travels for awhile. She then began to tell me how important and necessary her journeys were to the country, that she belonged to the Army of the Potomac and controlled the whole vote of it politically, which rather surprised me (at that time). I unfortunately said I thought politics was not a woman's sphere in life, when such an avalanche of talk was thrust at me, I was really scared and did not reply.

After awhile she rose, left the seat and with an umbrella rolled as a cane opened all the ventilators that were closed, stopping between each to make a speech. While this was going on (in the night) a man with a child in his arms stood at my elbow and I told him to take the seat. Imagination can better picture the scene on her return than I can tell. I offered my seat, but she declined and left the car. I

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never encountered her again, though heard of her occasionally through newspapers. After she left the people gradually settled down to sleep, no doubt better for the open ventilators. Later in my life I crossed the desert, sleeping on the ground with armed soldiers for my protection from Indians, but I can truly say I was more comfy and slept better than the night on the car returning to my home from my soldier, who was marching with his men to join Sherman.

In the meantime during the time I was travelling East the troops were hastening to join Sherman in his campaign. After many engagements and fighting their way as far as Macon, Georgia, many of the troops and officers were captured, including my husband, and were held prisoners of war, both at Macon, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. At Macon, he did not suffer as many did. Food was scarce, but the Colonel and his adjutant had been fortunate in arresting a tax collector some days before their capture, so they had some confederate money which they succeeded in hiding and were able to buy food. General Stoneman and his staff messed with the Colonel for about six weeks; then General Stoneman and he were ordered to Charleston, South Carolina, and were put in the building known as “The Castle.” They were put in a part of the tower under fire of

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our guns from the earthworks and fortifications. They were kept in Charleston three months.

While in the prison at Macon, there was no positive suffering, but the quarters and bunks they had to sleep in were very small and dirty. In the prison yards the orders were of course very strict. If you stepped outside a certain post you were shot; if you stepped over a low fence you were shot. It is easy to be seen how some poor fellow, walking and thinking of his home, would lose his life. My husband lost sixty-five pounds. He had left me a broad-shouldered big man; he returned a thin one with a *beard*, which was promptly shaved within an hour of his arrival.

Now that the war was over the Colonel was given three months leave to recuperate his health. We all implored him to leave the Army and return with his father in the banking business, but the fascination of the Army was upon him, and he later returned to a captaincy in the 15th Infantry, his original appointment.

After his leave was up, he was detailed for recruiting duty at New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he could come home every evening.

I was then with my Mother in Elizabeth. And it was there in that loved home that I knew the greatest joy that can come to a woman. A bird sang in my

## “RECOLLECTIONS”

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heart all the day long. I was soon to become a mother.

Peace had been declared before my son was born, and no happier woman lived. I was the fifth daughter of my parents and had the first grandson. The other grand-children were lovely little girls. My son was called John McGowan, for my adored Father.

The days flew by rapidly; the child grew strong and well, but when the springtime came, orders came for the Colonel to go to Macon, Georgia. I could not go. The doctors thought it imprudent for either mother or babe to go South at that time. So in the home I loved I watched the little one grow, and patiently waited until Autumn came, which brought me another precious boy.







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